

# Nicaragua--Its Politics and Outlook

Written for The Advertiser by  
EDUARDO BACON.

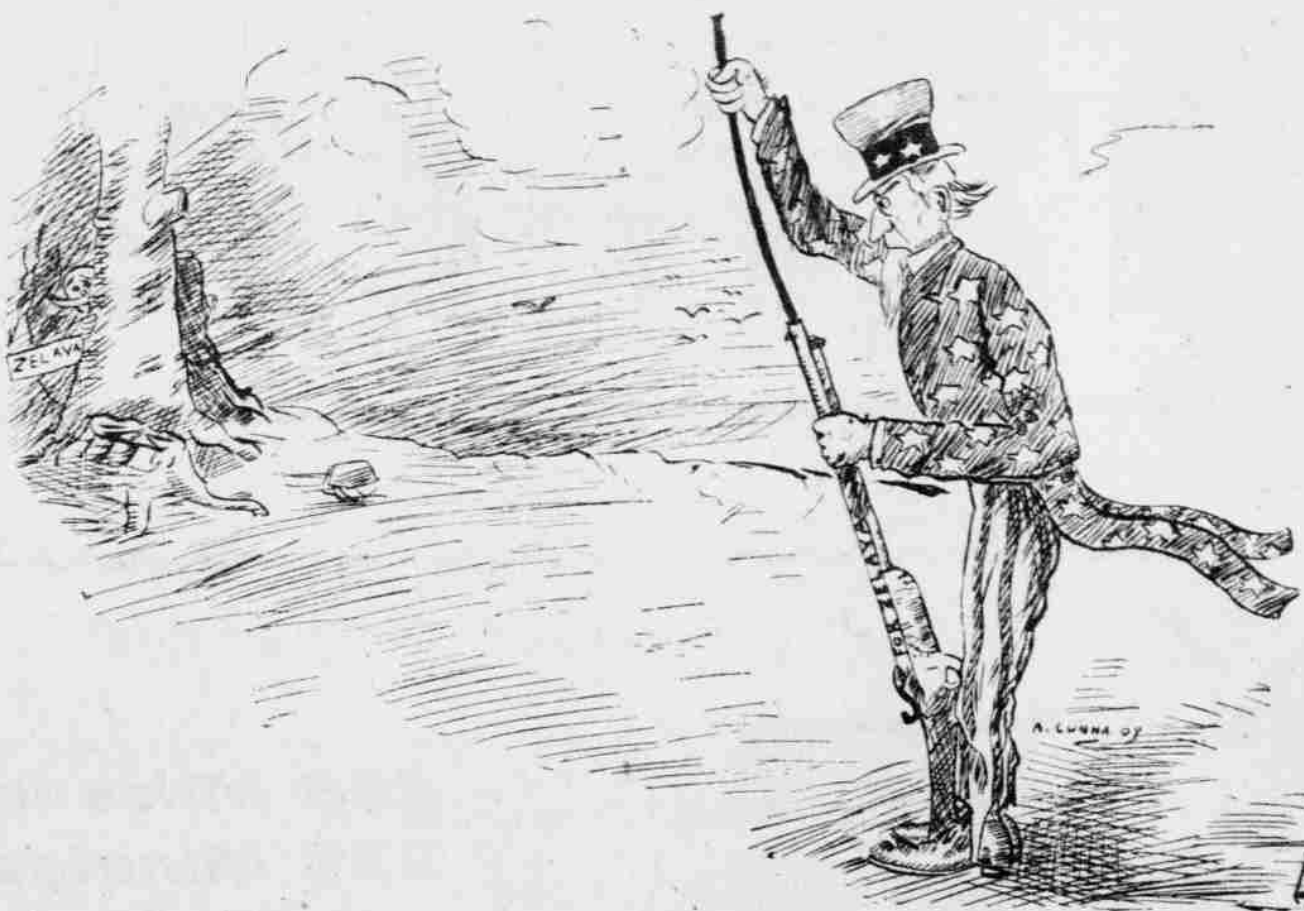
Many persons read the reports in the daily papers concerning the troubles in Nicaragua. Some do not know where Nicaragua is, while others have only a hazy idea concerning the country now so prominent in the eyes of the world. The fact is that no one who has not lived in Central America can have any clear idea of conditions in the republic, now being ostensibly battled for between Zelaya and the revolutionists. Nicaragua is one of the five independent States constituting Central America. It has a constitution granting equal rights to all residents of the country. Considering size and political conditions, it is one of the most productive countries of the Western Hemisphere, producing in large quantities coffee, hides, sugar, rubber, cotton, sisal, alligator skins and fruits, while it is second in mineral production, Honduras being first in Central America. The industries are controlled principally by aliens, leading among these being the Germans, British and Americans. All manufacturing is done under concessions, the foreign companies paying a high price to the government for the monopolies in certain lines.

In return for the price paid, the government forces the citizen to comply, with the terms of the concessions, although the money paid in by the foreigner goes, not into the national treasury, but into the private pocket of the president and his ministers. These officials also receive, as a rule, a share of the corporation stock as a bonus. The many manufactures of aguardiente (cane rum) are controlled by a German firm, non-resident. The tobacco trust is controlled by New York financiers, and under its concession all tobacco growers must pay a large tax to the government and sell their leaf to the trust only. If a grower should deal with an independent tobacco buyer and be caught, arrest and imprisonment would be his lot. If a retailer handles tobacco that has not paid tribute to the trust, the same fate awaits him.

Then there is the Compania Ganadera, the livestock trust, which controls the meat trade, both domestic and export. According to its charter, the citizens can not even breed their own cattle without paying the trust for the privilege. Other foreign-owned monopolies are those for furnishing electrical power, manufacture of ice, wire nails, candles, and the importing of certain articles from New Orleans, this last being controlled by a New Orleans firm, which has a line of steamers and controls the docking facilities at Graytown.

Thus Nicaraguans are deprived of their constitutional rights and can not even grumble, for dissatisfaction publicly expressed leads to the jails, and in extreme cases, to the execution grounds. Often there is no trial be-

BE GOOD, GOL DARN YE, OR I'LL MAKE YOU.



LOADING UP THE OLD GUN.

ried. Should Estrada be named as president or dictator, on the strength of his victory, however, it will avail the people little. It will be only an exchange of tyrants. Estrada has a record quite as black as that of Zelaya. He is one of the cheap nobility of the country, an ignoble breed held up on the shoulders of alien monopolists. Nicaragua's only hope lies in the election of some strong man from the plebeian class, a man strong enough to resist the advances of foreign fortune hunters. If the five Central American States could be banded into a confederacy and a government firmly established, it would rival Mexico. Before that can be done, such leaders as Cabrera, Figaroa, Bonilla, Iglesias, and Morales will have to be banished. They are the ones whose selfish ambitions bring about the intrigues and the turmoil. I know most of these men personally and my knowledge of them is that they are murderers, without heart or conscience.

#### American Intervention Needed.

Without a Washington, a Bolivar, a Maximo Jerez or a Morazan Juarez to bring internal peace to the country, Nicaraguans will have to look to the world and preferably to the United States for salvation. American interference, stopping the bloodshed, putting the country on a firm basis and supervising its internal affairs would bring happiness to hundreds of thousands and promote the development of a country the wealth of which is as yet unappreciated at home or abroad.

#### Execution of Americans.

The shooting of Leroy Cannon should not be the main reason for American intervention, however. I have met Cannon several times and his Nicaraguan record is not one of which Americans can be proud. If those now interested in his death would look up the records in the case they would see that his execution was not uncalculated for.

Le Roy Cannon, at the outbreak of the war with Honduras three years ago, owned a hacienda and rubber farm in Nicaragua and was making good headway financially under the Zelaya government. He had also a civil commission. During this war he betrayed the trust that was placed in him for money and became a spy. He was captured and brought before Zelaya, who ordered him tried. He was given trial found and guilty, being caught with the goods, and sentenced to death.

An American interceded in his behalf and Zelaya pardoned him. As his property was confiscated, Zelaya gave him from his own pocket \$5000 in American gold and ordered him to leave the country. This he did going to Guatemala, where he met Lee Christmas and Cabrera. These men furnished him with men and arms and he returned to Nicaragua, being the leader of several raids wherein people were killed.

One more he was taken, having been wounded in an engagement in the mountains in which a German was in command of the federal forces. I was present at the time. The federalists, who were picked Leonese machete men, clamored for his life and that of Christmas, who was also taken and it was all that the commander could do to save their lives.

These two men were allowed to escape this time and one returned to Guatemala where he is the captain of the body guard of Cabrera and the other went to Salvador and was given a position as director of police for a large department.

One day I was visiting the latter in his office when in came a boy soldier about fifteen years old. He complained of ill treatment at the hands of his sergeant but in place of justice he received a blow from the fist of the director, which sent him spinning, while curses and kicks followed the blow. I ventured to ask why he treated the kid this way and the director replied with apparent pride, "That is the way to treat these dogs."

"I felt like kicking him but as I was there on service it would have injured my cause had I done so. The present trouble in Nicaragua is not only the outcome of the ambition of Estrada but there is behind it the jealousy of that tyrannical dictator in Guatemala, Estrada Cabrera, who wishes to dethrone Zelaya in order to place a man of his choice there who will not interfere when he wishes to pillage that poor war-worn country called Honduras. For this purpose has he lent his men his munitions of war. He it is and his arch conspirator who encourage the depredations on the north-western frontier of Nicaragua and Honduras by the Salvadoreños. This is the man who has placed his choice for the presidency of one country of the five and is desirous of doing so in the re-

maintaining three that he may realize the ambition of his life, which is this: One country and one dictatorship.

Nicaragua alone remains in his way. That country beaten the other two will give in without a struggle. I mean Salvador and Honduras for one he has already acquired and the other has nothing to fight with. Systematically he has stimulated and encouraged all kinds of rebellion in Nicaragua for many years, always placing some tool at the head to whom he would promise aid and the presidency.

Nicaragua once conquered, he will

have all of the coast from Mexico to Costa Rica on Caribbean and Pacific for Honduras can not resist and the powers will do nothing as he treats them lovingly, granting all kinds of concessions to their subjects. Costa Rica will be forced to submit or be wiped out.

He will then install himself and for a time treat the people well until he has his machinery running elsewhere like it does in Guatemala. Then the oppression will come but too late.

Such is the true condition of Central American politics.



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EDUARDO BACON,

Who assisted in one capture of Leroy Cannon, late of the revolutionary forces of Nicaragua.

tween the arrest and the firing squad. One day I saw seventy-five persons, men and women, shot down without trial, and according to the laws of most countries, for no offense.

#### No Freedom of Speech.

There is a form of senate, the members being named by the president. They are the "representatives" of the people and do what they are told. Opposition to a bill is a thing unheard of. Any insurgent member there would be silenced by a bullet before the vote. The constitution grants freedom of the press and speech, but this was easily knocked in the head by declaring the country under martial law, and under martial law it has been for many years—since 1893.

The rulers are millionaires, the people are worse than paupers.

Even religion is under the ban and the priesthood must act according to the government rules.

#### Indians Massacred.

Rum being a monopoly, the manufacture of illicit spirits is a very heinous crime. Indians living away from the towns sometimes brew spirits, and these, when caught, are shot down like rabbits, not even being arrested. The Nicaraguan Indians are a remnant of the Tolttec tribe.

I was one of a party of engineers to lay out a government road through the Tolttec country, our orders being to clear the right of way through their farms or anywhere else it had to go. We had much trouble with the Indians, the tribe threatening to kill us all, but fled at the mere sight of the government order. The entire tribe of fifteen thousand braves is now under arms and helping General Estrada. In fact they are the backbone of the revolution.

#### Revolution a Just Cause.

The people of Nicaragua have been oppressed so long and so grievously that their revolt against Zelaya is just-